

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-01 /052 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5187

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E.. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PN

SUBJECT: SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO PRESS INQUIRIES
ON PANAMA'S DISCLOSURE OF NEGOTIATING DETAILS

1. IN VIEW OF GOPS INTENT TO CONTINUE WITH
NEGOTIATIONS AND TO AVOID FURTHER EXACERBATION OF SITUATION
HERE AND MINIMIZE REACTION IN US TO PANAMA'S DISCLOSURE
OF NEGOTIATING DETAILS, EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS
FOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT ARISE DURING NOON PRESS
BRIEFING.

2. QUESTION: WHAT DOES PANAMA'S RELEASE OF NEGOTIATING DETAILS
DO TO CONFIDENTIALITY OF NEGOTIATIONS?

ANSWER: THE DEPARTMENT STILL ADHERES TO ITS POLICY OF MAIN-
TAINING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.
WE CANNOT ENGAGE IN AIRING OUR POSITIONS OR DIFFERENCES IN
PUBLIC. TO CONTINUE TO DO SO WOULD INHIBIT OUR ABILITY TO
PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT ERRORS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY BOTH SIDES IN
THIS RESPECT AND THAT A COMBINATION OF FACTORS, INCLUDING
STATEMENTS BY US OFFICIALS, CAUSED PANAMANIAN TO FEEL THEY
MUST RESPOND. WE REGRET THAT THEY FELT IMPELLED TO DISCUSS
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THE TALKS IN SUCH DETAIL.

3. QUESTION: DOES PANAMA'S POSITION PAPER ACCURATELY DESCRIBE THE UNITED STATES' POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS?

ANSWER: I CANNOT GIVE DETAILS CONCERNING THE UNITED STATES POSITION; HOWEVER, OUR READING OF THE DOCUMENT IN QUESTION MAKES IT CLEAR THAT FURTHER CLARIFICATION TO THE PANAMANIAN OF OUR POSITION WILL BE NECESSARY.

4. QUESTION: AMBASSADOR BUNDER IS HIS SPEECH TO CANAL EMPLOYEES ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THREE CONCEPTUAL AGREEMENTS EXIST. COULD YOU COMMENT ON THEM?

ANSWER: YES. THREE CONCEPTUAL AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN REACHED. I SHOULD POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THESE ARE ONLY TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS AND REMAIN SUBJECT TO CHANGE WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS REACH THEIR FINAL STAGE. I CANNOT NOW GIVE DETAILS OF THESE AGREEMENTS.
JORDEN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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